

HIERARCHIES

Hebrew & Christian

A Contribution towards

REUNION

by

G. N. Nuttall-Smith, M.A.



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We believe that the Holy Spirit has called us in a very solemn and special manner to associate ourselves in penitence and prayer with all those who deplore the divisions of Christian people, and are inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church.

There can be no fulfilment of the Divine purpose in any scheme of reunion which does not ultimately include the great Latin Church of the West.

(Lambeth Conference, 1920.)

The fact that God has, to say the least, permitted this thought of union to fix itself in so many souls, is, in itself, an earnest of its accomplishment.

(Dr. Pusey.)

Hierarchies: Hebrew & Christian¹

THE position of the Roman See presents an arresting spectacle, however it may be explained; its survival in the face of every degradation and vicissitude, of every machination of the world-powers to compass its control, parallels in many particulars the history of the Jewish high-priesthood, and makes one the more inclined to ponder whether if the one persisted by divine appointment, *until its work was done*, the other may not also have a power behind it, other than that of human chance, and a work to do in the world which none shall be able to withstand or resist.

I.

All through the tradition and history of the Hebrew church and nation, we find the line of Aaron. It survived obscurity amounting almost to extinction, in the days of Eli; its representatives again often rose nobly to the highest ideals and responsibilities of their office, as in the days of Jehoiada; it was exalted to the summits of worldly glory, as under "Simon the son of Onias, the great priest"; it too often sank to the level of mere unscrupulous and godless worldlings, as in the apostate Alcimus, or to the wretched weakness of opportunism, as in the tragic figures of Annas and Caiaphas.

The very existence of the high-priesthood in the later and more fully documented times, its traditions rooted in the remote past, bears silent but eloquent testimony to its lofty calling, to mediate between the heavenly King of Israel and His sinful people. For the tabernacle and all connected with it, including, as I take it, the high-priesthood itself, were but earthly counterparts of eternal realities. Whoever the high-priest might be, however unworthy, personally, of his awful and exalted office, to him alone pertained the duty and privilege unutterable of "entering in once a year, not without blood, within the veil, and of there beholding, amid the cloud of sacred incense, that 'glory' destined one day to be revealed in measure to all mankind."

¹ This paper, read in substance before the "Oxford Clerical Society," on 11th March, 1930, was suggested by a pamphlet by Dr. Goudge, entitled "The Roman Controversy."

² Eccles. L. 1. B.C. 143—135. 1 Macc. XIII. 41, 42.

§ 2 Macc. XIV. 1 ff. 1 Macc. VII. 12 ff.

The spiritual independence of this office was not intrenched on by the fact that individual high-priests were frequently deposed or appointed by the civil power ; for no king ever dared to invade it with impunity. Even Solomon, although offering sacrifice with the people, and public prayer¹, never presumed to approach the Holy Place ; nor did Herod, for all his wickedness, intrude on priestly privileges as did Uzziah "when his heart was lifted up," to his endless sorrow, and "fourscore priests that were valiant men," thrust him forth from the sanctuary, a stricken leper².

If Pompey entered the shrine³, it was as a heathen. The courtly Josephus excuses him, noting the piety of the man and the fact that he forebore to lay a hand on the huge temple treasures lying all around him, which Cicero also records, and Josephus goes on to remark how Crassus' looting was followed by his speedy death.

The independence of the Hebrew high-priesthood, like that of other priestly orders, was secured by the possession of landed property, that great stabilizer of human rank and independence, and later it came to be associated, not to its spiritual advantage, with much further temporal power.

But temporal power can never be of the *esse* of Priesthood—nor indeed, speaking generally, of its *bene esse*. The power of independent action is all to the good, indeed is imperative for any spiritual body ; but beyond that, temporal power may well poison it.

Ah ! Constantine, of how much ill was cause—

Not thy conversion—but those rich domains

That the first wealthy pope received of thee !⁴

Under the Asmonean priest-kings, unworthy successors as most, if not all of them were, of the noble Mattathias and his warrior sons, Judaea, for eighty years⁵, maintained its political independence, as under the ancient house of David. It was but a lull in the storm ; Judaea was forgotten in the warring world, but by the time Mariamne, "the last of the Maccabees," married the first Herod, we find the sons of Aaron, whom Josephus—himself a priest of the highest course—describes as the nobility of his country, and with them the high-priesthood itself, dancing at the beck of the Edomite usurpers. From the days of Herod the Great—that "Bluff King Hal" of

¹ 2 Chron. V. 6.

² 2 Chron. XXVI. 19.

³ B.C. 63.

⁴ Inferno XIX. 118. Trans. J. Milton.

⁵ From B.C. 143. 1 Macc. XIII. 41.

To B.C. 63. Abolition of Asmonean kingdom by Pompey.

the ancient world—the Jewish high-priesthood,—whatever of prestige, whatever of worldly glory was left to it—was overshadowed and controlled by the civil power—Herodian or Roman, as the case might be,—until its final disappearance with the downfall of the holy people.

But before this befell the young Christian church had reason to know the large measure of authority still left it by the liberal policy of the empire, and to this very day we may see the place of scourging in the House of Caiaphas outside the southern walls of Jerusalem, in the unearthing of which we owe so much to the Dominican fathers of the Holy City. It was, in all probability, the very spot whence "Peter and the apostles" returned rejoicing that they "had been thought worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name¹."

Whatever irregularities may have from time to time arisen connected with the office, it is difficult to come to any other conclusion from Holy Scripture than that the high-priesthood was intended to be the great, permanent institution, to be the one rallying-point for Israel².

That it was so in our Lord's time, and had been so, at least in intention, so far back as any records exist of post-mosaic Hebrew religion seems abundantly clear.

The permanence of this ancient line of priests, and its prestige, its very persistence through deep degradation, seem to mark the *office* as divine, however much its *holders* may have profaned it with their unworthy presence.

It may be asked whether in Old Testament times the boundaries of the church were distinctly marked, and whether outward unity could not be broken. Outward unity certainly was broken from time to time, but such breach was never acquiesced in by Jerusalem.

In the history of the Jewish church we do find breaks-away and schisms, claiming orthodoxy more or less; claims more or less well founded as the case might be. But these tended to disappear, leaving the Jerusalem High-priesthood as the one original and abiding centre.

It is needless to go into the history of the various schismatic centres, existing in Old Testament times, such as the temple at Elephantine, which lately discovered Aramaic papyri exhibit to us as both unorthodox and unrecognised; the Onion at Heliopolis, which Josephus charges with having been founded "not out of a sober disposition, but to contend with the Jews at Jerusalem³,"

¹ Acts V. 29, 41.

² Exod. XL. 15.

³ Bell-Jud. VII. X. 3.

or the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, destroyed by John Hyrcanus, cir. B.C. 140¹.

None of these centres, not to say of Judaism, but at least of Judaistic worship, endured, nor was any one of them acknowledged as orthodox. We hear nothing of the Onfon in the New Testament, nor of Elephantine: the Ethiopian eunuch came, not to them, although they presumably were on his way from his own land, but to Jerusalem, to worship. Our Lord's relations with the Samaritans were those of One who acknowledges and welcomes goodness, wherever it may be found, but He never owns them as part of "Israel." "Salvation is of the Jews," said He to the woman of Samaria.

The high-priestly authority tended then to become ecumenical. Wherever men adored the God of Israel they "came up" from time to time "to Jerusalem for to worship²." Jerusalem was the Mecca, so to speak, and over its temple was the High-priest. His claim may not have extended, doubtless did not extend, to any assertion of *infallibility*—one rabbi, or another "bound or loosed" according to his judgment, and his decision remained as a ruling for his successors; very much as do the decisions of judges in English law. "The scribes," and not the high-priest alone, "sat in Moses' seat," but it is evident that the high-priest, the son of Aaron, was head of the sacred college, and, as such, would have the final voice.

But when we find St. John believing in the supernatural character of the pronouncements of such a man as Caiaphas, that "he spoke not of himself³," but as a prophet, we begin to wonder whether popular, if not official opinion, did not view the high-priest's deliberate, *ex-cathedra* utterances as in some measure infallible, or even of the nature of inspiration, which latter is more than is officially held of the "infallibility" of the Pope⁴!

And St. Paul apologised for speaking hastily to the high priest saying that he was unaware to whom it was he was speaking⁵.

"Israel's," St. Paul tells us, was "the glory" (that is the "real presence," the "Shekinah") "the covenants," the giving of the law, the "service of God⁶," and full provision was made

¹ Cf. "New Commentary of the Bible" Apoc. p. 5.

² Acts VIII. 27. Cf. Isa. II. 2-4.

And parallel in Micah IV. 1, 2 (in B.C. 720-692).

³ St. John XI. 49-51.

⁴ Cf. Rev. Leslie Walker, S.J. "Problem of Rennon," 1920, p. 246. Art. "Infallibility" and cf. the Definition of Infallibility, in Decrees of the Vatican Council.

For the text, convenient reference may be made to Salmon's "Infallibility of the Church," Appendix.

⁵ Acts XXIII. 3-5.

⁶ Romans IX. 4.

to shield the continuity of their tradition in the Aaronic priesthood, and in the central shrine.

There was no other head and centre to the Church of the Old Covenant in our Lord's day.

II.

And to all appearance He took steps to provide for a similar centralization and continuity in the Church of the New Covenant.

First we find him choosing and training the Twelve to carry on his work ; next, treating one of these as leader of the band¹. "First, Simon who is called Peter." That is to say, Simon was not only first in the list, but first in place. Then we find this same apostle alone, and none other, invested with the "keys" of stewardship, calling to mind the words in Isaiah concerning Eliakim, son of Hilkiah—"The key of the house of David I will lay upon his shoulder and he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open²."

Our Lord often referred to his own Davidic kingship and never refused its title ; His words to Peter may well point directly to those just quoted, and would thus receive new force and meaning.

The Davidic kingship, mystically and prophetically, was eternal. That is to say, it was of the heavenly order³.

St. Peter's "stewardship" in the new kingdom of heaven would thus likewise be perpetual rather than transitory—the creation of an *office*, that of the faithful and wise steward "whom his Lord should set over his household to give them their portion of food in due season⁴."

St. Peter again is called "The Rock." *Why* may be open to dispute, but *the fact* remains ; and as Cephas, Peter, the Rock, he was ever after known.

Is it possible to believe that all the grave and repeated indications of Peter as leader of the band were intended to be merely personal ? Was not our Lord looking far ahead and providing a centre for His Kingdom ?

The precedence of Peter, and of Peter's see, has never been disproved, however eagerly it may have been disputed by "hot gospellers" of Reformation times, as well as by their "spiritual sons" in our own day.

¹ Matt. X. 2. Mk. XVI. 19.

² Isa. XXII. 22, cf. Rev. 3. 7.

³ 2 Sam. VII. 13 ff. Ps. 89. 27, 29, 36. Cf. Heb. 1. 5.

⁴ St. Luke XII. 42. Cf. St. Matt. XXIV. 45.

Rome gave not Peter his precedence. Peter went, because of his precedence, to the then metropolis of the world.

The Pope was no less Pope when he reigned in Avignon; he would be no less Pope now if he reigned in Dublin, or New York.

Clement claims authority, with no uncertain voice, for the Roman church over "The church of God which sojourneth in Corinth¹," ending by assuring them that "ye will give us great joy and gladness if ye render *obedience* unto the things written by us through the Holy Ghost²." Whether the "us" refers to the church of Rome, as in § 1, or to Clement himself, is of no very great moment, as in § 40 Clement makes it pretty clear that he held the threefold ministry as of the Lord's appointment, and Clement stood at the head in Rome when he wrote the epistle.

Irenaeus tells us of Peter's foundation, conjointly with Paul, of the Roman Church³, but the very fact that the Roman Church in after ages looked upon Peter as its chief founder, points once again to his position as "choragus" of the apostolic band. Irenaeus again, in a well-known passage⁴, speaks of "the Roman church, to which, on account of its higher original, the whole church (I mean the faithful on all sides) must needs agree." (or, "assemble"—"convenire.").

Tertullian's⁵ fiery diatribe against Pope Callistus⁶ only fixes the position of the papacy in the third century. "Pontifex Maximus, bishop of bishops, forsooth" are his words of scorn.

But it is open to all to read the existing records of the Church, and to form their own opinion, which very possibly may coincide with that expressed in Dr. Streeter's brilliant thesis on "The Primitive Church," where he surmises that monepiscopacy was *not primitive* in Rome, and that at the date when "Clement" and "Hermas" were written, the government of the Roman Church "*may have been of the type which might not inappropriately be called presbyterian!*"

But really it is not of very great moment whether we call the presiding presbyter, High-priest, or Chief Bishop, or Moderator of the Assembly: the real point is that in the year 97 the church of Rome *had* a head, a mouthpiece of its governing body, and that that head was Clement. "The Papacy was already born."

No one but an ignoramus would venture to lay it down that the Papacy sprung up fully accoutred in the days of Peter and Paul,

¹ Ad Corinth, § 1.

² *Ibid.* § 63.

³ Adv. Haer III. 3.

⁴ Adv. Haer III. B 21.

⁵ De Pudicitia.

⁶ Reigned A.D. 218—223.

like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. It is obvious that there was development, even slow development. But the striking point is that that development has had but one trend throughout the ages, through good report and evil report, down to the present hour. "There shall be progress," wrote *St. Vincent of Lerins*, before A.D. 450, "but it will be progress and not change. With the growth of ages there must of necessity be a growth of intelligence, of wisdom, of knowledge, for each man, as for all the church. But the religion of souls must imitate the progress of human form, which never ceases to be the same in the maturity of age, as in the flower of youth."

Consider our Lord's words to Peter, weigh the whole evidence of the New Testament, the keys of stewardship, the name of "Rock-man," the vision at Joppa, the mission to Corneilius, the place of prominence given to him in the Gospels, and even more so in the Acts, St. Paul's visit to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion "to make the acquaintance of Cephas"¹—The word in the original, it will be remembered is "*historesai*," which Bengel comments on as "*Grave verbum, id de re magna*"²—and you have the papacy.

Gwatkin, of Emmanuel, evangelical as he was, used to tell his pupils, in his own inimitable way, of his father's comment on Luke XII. 42 ff., "Who is the faithful and wise steward?"—Who but the Bishop of Rome, so faithful in his witness in the early Church? But time was when the "steward" forgot his charge and "began to beat the menservants and the maidservants and to eat and drink with the drunken"; and the foretold judgment came, and his Lord "cut him asunder and appointed his portion with the unfaithful"—the schism of East and West—the breakaway of the Reformation."

But God does not go back upon His gifts and callings³. Rome still lives, has learnt by her mistakes and is more powerful and more alive to-day than ever before.

So there Rome stands, like that other ancient hierarchy—the Aaronic high-priesthood—some will say, in her arrogance, some will say, in her self-assurance, some would even profanely hint a likeness to that scarlet strumpet, pagan Rome of the Apocalypse! But undoubtedly Rome knows her own mind.

All I would add is this. Let us not conclude that because Rome

¹ Gal. I. 18. R.V. Marg.

² Cf. Chrys. *in loc.*

³ Rom. XI. 29 (They are "without change of mind.")

is not, and still more, has not been, all that we would picture of a great and divinely appointed power on earth, that therefore God has had no hand in her persistence for 2,000 years. To say this would be to condemn the Aaronic high-priesthood—it would be to condemn ourselves.

For some will say, How can the Papacy have anything divine about it when its history has been associated with so much corruption? They prove too much. Has any pope been worse than the high-priest and king Jannaeus Alexander who caused 800 of his own fellow-countrymen, who opposed him in civil war, to be crucified in front of his palace while he sat down with his women to carouse and watch their sufferings?¹ and he was not the only wicked pontiff. Yet he was "Gods' high-priest," "The ruler of his people."

No, let us not despair. If Christ desired and arranged for an outward symbol of unity in His Church; then a return to outward unity is not impossible, and we, if we will, may be workers for it with Him, in a faith which never fails, even if it well nigh faints, and which never despairs.

One would hope, one would pray, that we Anglicans may not be found wanting; that no channel may remain unexplored, unsounded, which might lead to the true re-union of Christendom. It would be a long step on this return journey were the Church of England to find means of ending that schism, which she certainly began. For whatever the difficulties which stand between us and Rome now, or which stood between us in the time of Cranmer, however true and necessary may have been our protest then, it was most certainly not faith but politics which began the quarrel.

Put all this and much more of a like kind together. Does it not set one thinking? I cannot but remember what a member of the Malines Conferences once remarked in my hearing with reference to those memorable meetings. "One thing became apparent there, namely that there is much more in the Petrine claim than we are generally disposed to admit."

Lately some of us have been reading Lord Halifax's publication of Malines documents. The paper read by Cardinal Mercier himself, but hitherto unpublished, *L'Eglise Anglicaine Unie, Non Absorbée*, is of a nature to set us thinking.

The writer saw restored the ancient English Patriarchate, with the Archbishop of Canterbury reigning, "a pope as it were, of

¹ Cir. B.C. 88.

another world¹." He referred to the large autonomy accorded by agreement with the Uniate Churches of the East, churches which retain their own customs, language, liturgy, communion in both kinds, married priesthood. It should certainly be carefully examined by all who have the cause of Christian reunion at heart.

Nothing tangible has come of the Malines Conferences, and nothing, so far as *rapprochement* to Rome is concerned, has come of the stirring words of the last Lambeth Conference in its *Appeal to all Christian People*.

"There are other ancient Episcopal Communions in East and West, to whom ours is bound by many ties of faith and tradition: We who send forth this Appeal would say that if the authorities of other communions should so desire, we are persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, Bishops and Clergy of our communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend itself to their congregations."

Once again in this the hour of a new Lambeth Conference, at this time of "cordial gestures," as well towards non-episcopal bodies as towards those Eastern churches which have never been so closely associated with ourselves as Rome has ever been since the days of Pope S. Gregory, and for that very reason never so sharply antagonized; *it is well to remind ourselves that Rome was not outside the purview of Lambeth, when ten years ago it put forth its grave and measured words*. We should pray, and work, and strive for the unity of Christ's visible Body here on earth. We of the Anglican Church have suffered enough from divided counsels. Have we forgotten Bishop Frank Weston's warning against "the horrible contentment" with the "status quo" in the Church²? The Bishops at Lambeth in 1920 were quite explicit in their call to reunion. And did not the late Archbishop Lord Davidson say that a reunion which did not take account of Rome was unthinkable? As indeed it is.

III.

Reading this pamphlet, someone is sure to say, "but if he believes the Roman claims to be justified, he ought to be a Roman Catholic."

¹ Expression used by Urban II. with reference to St. Anselm at the Council of Bari, A.D. 1098. "*Includamus hunc in orbe nostro, quasi alterius orbis papam.*"

² "Lambeth and Reunion," by the Bishops of Zanzibar, Peterborough and Hereford. S.P.C.K.

It sounds simple advice, but does it meet the case?

The Church of England prides itself on its breadth. Should we alone leave the church in which we have been called to be christians, cease to exercise our orders and indeed tacitly admit their nullity, because we *see much in the claims of Rome*? I cannot think it would be right to do so, even if all other difficulties were cleared away. Doubtless it would suit the views of some, but, nevertheless, we cannot barter our souls even to purchase "peace" in the Anglican church. Our first loyalty is to our own conscience and to the Lord in Whom we believe and Whom we adore. Short of holding communion with heresy we cannot renounce our church; let her renounce us if she will.

I do not think we Anglicans ought to leave our church, to forsake our flocks, even though we should see that Rome's claim to be the "mother and mistress of all Churches" is not without historical background; and even though we should not find ourselves able to regard "Infallibility" as altogether extravagant or outrageous. For after all, what does the Decree of Infallibility come to, more than a claim to final authority in the spiritual decisions of the church, as in secular matters the Royal Assent makes a statute law? Does it imply more than the pope's oft-asserted claim that no council is valid without his representation at it?

And as for reunion, it behoves us to seek through corporate action an understanding, first of all with the rest of Western Christendom, a reunion which, while admitting the primacy and authority of the Holy See, will not prejudice the validity of our own sacramental life, nor our claim to recognition as an ancient and historic church.

